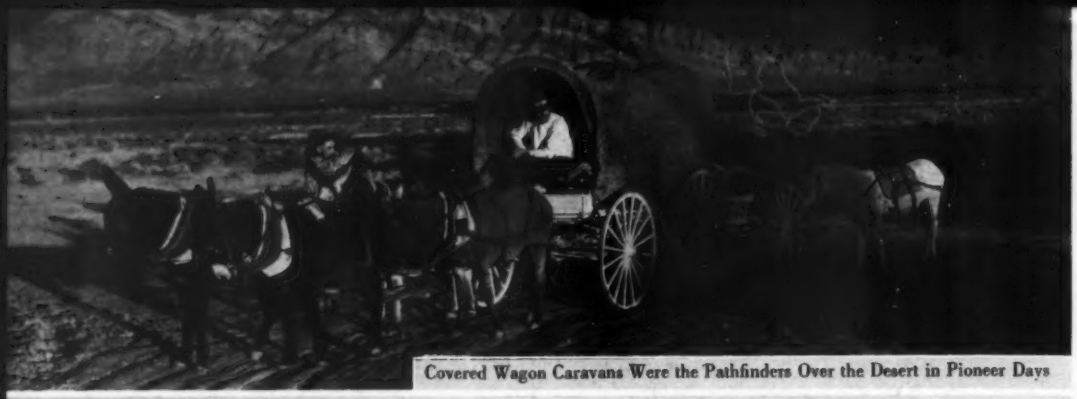
NEVADA HIGHWAYS and PARKS

TRANSPORTATION NUMBER

PUBLISHED BY THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS



Covered Wagon Caravans Were the Pathfinders Over the Desert in Pioneer Days

The Prospector and His Outfit Followed Soon After and Found Gold

Which Brought Others Who Traveled by Stage to the New Nevada Mining Camps

NEVADA HIGHWAYS AND PARKS

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TRAILS TO RAILS, ROADS, AND SKYWAYS

NEVADA'S story of rolling wheels over its wide open spaces of mountains and valleys runs from prairie schooners to streamliners. In the march of the years, first over roads and highways, then by rail, and later by airplane, the State has traveled a long way from the springless sway-backed covered wagon of the '49 type to the 1940 model motor car, the articulated streamliner, and the luxurious transport plane. Progress of transportation has accelerated the progress of Nevada.

First came the emigrants, the '49'ers, plodding ruts and breaking trails across an uncharted area to reach a promised land. Their path was beset by many dangers and it required weeks to travel 500 miles over the western wilderness. Descendants of these pioneers, less than a century afterward, span the same 500 miles by air in three hours and by motor car between sunup and sundown.

As early as 1851 a mail route giving monthly service crossed the State. The Pony Express came in 1860, followed closely by the Wells Fargo Company.

When weary oxen and horses looked up as they plodded along with the covered wagon over the endless miles of dreary desert and stared dumbly at the picturesque Pony Express rider, guarding his mail pouch, dashing by in 1861, a new era of speed came to the West. These flying hoofs brought about a startling change and established new records, but even they were not fast enough. The era lasted but a few years until progress pushed them off the trails.

When the daring rider waved a friendly gesture at the "iron horse" as it threw live sparks from its bulging smokestack, rattling by at 20 to 25 miles an hour towards the setting sun, he knew his work was doomed. Soon the thrilling activities of the Pony Express would become only a page in the book of western history. The transition did come and had far-reaching results. The Pony Express then became only a glorious epic in the history of western transportation.

Then a few years later the "iron horse" was put on the defensive by the chugging "horseless carriage" which challenged the steam locomotive's claim to speed and its wooden coaches to convenience. This challenge foretold another change—an amazing change which brought about an entirely new concept of roads and individual transportation.

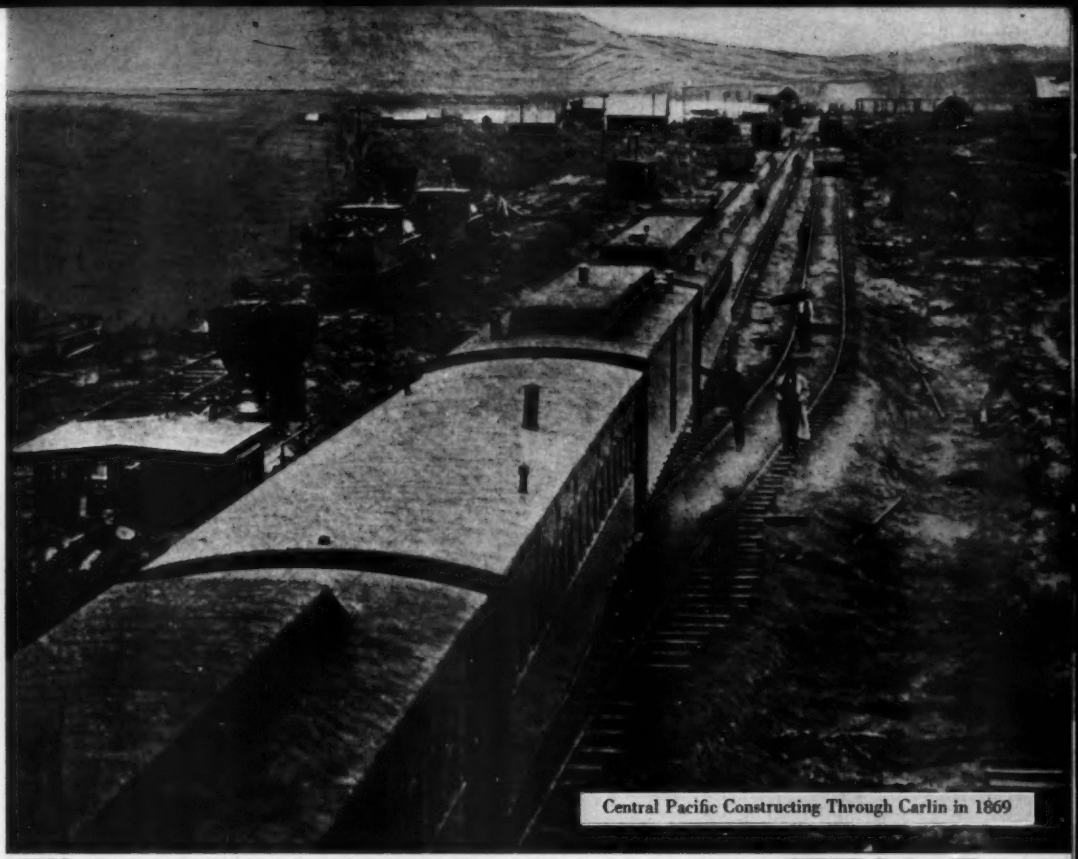
Evolution of transportation greatly affected the West, and more particularly Nevada. Less than thirty years ago the few citizens in the State who drove motor cars were hesitant about attempting a trip across the State in their "gas buggies." One never knew whether or not the destination would ever be reached; whether the uncertain coughing

NEVADA, one State without an income tax, a corporation tax, an inheritance tax, a gift tax, a sales tax. With cheap power, and liberal mining, corporation, taxation, and other laws. WELCOME TO NEVADA.

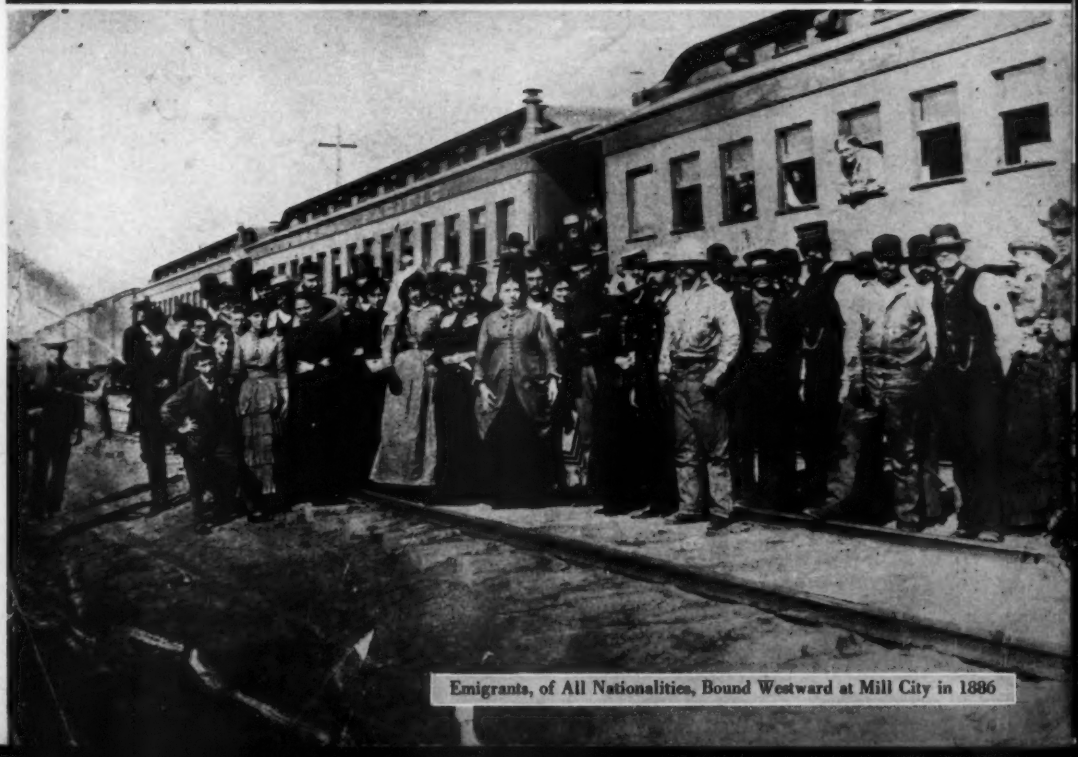
The Central Pacific Reached Reno and Built This Station in 1868

This Was a Beauty in Its Day

In 1883, Old 124 and Its Crew Stopped in Mill City, Nevada, as This Picture Shows



Central Pacific Constructing Through Carlin in 1869



Emigrants, of All Nationalities, Bound Westward at Mill City in 1886

Transporting Logs in the Lake Tahoe Region by "Bull Team" in the Early Days

mechanical contraption would break down somewhere on the terrible roads and leave the traveler stranded for days, awaiting repairs or parts. At that time roads were roads in name only. Even the horse, pulling the buggy or the buckboard, had difficulty in getting through the dust or the mud.

Constant improvement in motor cars forcefully emphasized the need for improved highways. That was the germ which brought on the widespread disease known as "the itchy foot." Good roads movements gained in strength, and eventually the demand for improved highways became irresistible.

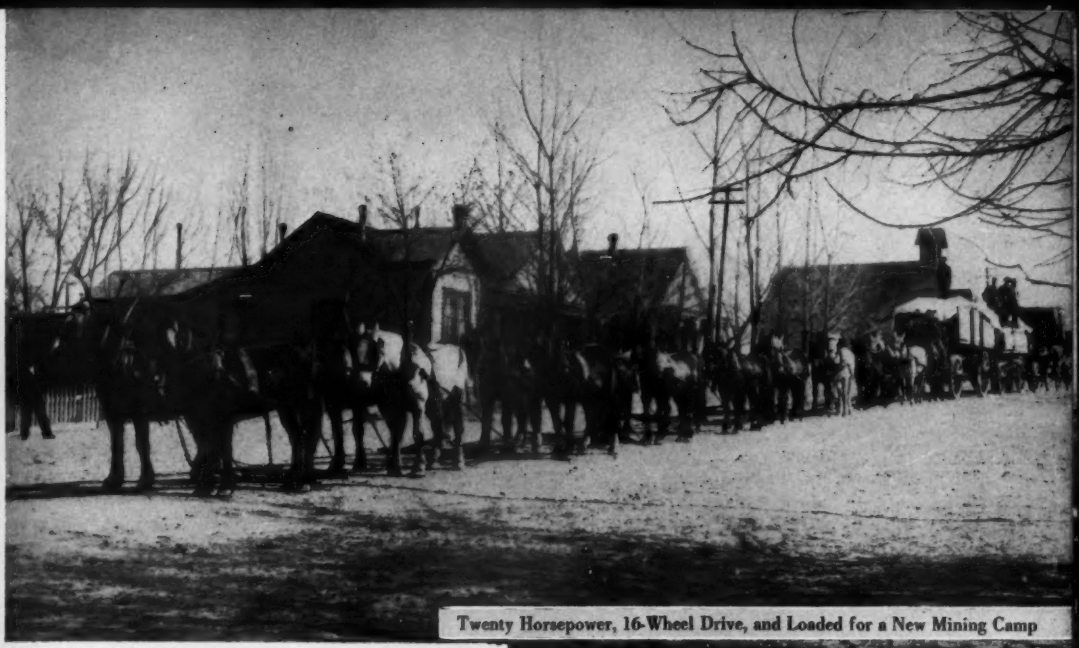
Hard-surfaced highways first made their appearance in Nevada after the end of the World War. They were laid down in scattered places, a segment here and a segment there, and widely separated. Extension of these segments gradually brought about a definite continuity. Each year new pieces were added until a black band of broad highway, weaving in and out of canyons, stretching straight across flat valleys, climbing over lofty mountain ranges, through forests and over deserts, reached from Wendover in the east to the California line in the west.

The Lincoln Highway, now also known as U S 50, became the pathfinder, and paved stretches were placed first along that route, but the Victory Highway, or U S 40, coursing more to the north, was completed first

Old Wood Burner Rusting Its Pipes Away

as a hard-surfaced road through Nevada. Both of these splendid highways serve many modern communities in the extensive cattle raising and mining sections, and are now paved from State line to State line.

More motor cars, commercial and passenger, came to the West in the intervening years; more roads followed in their trail. Another route, delineated, then completed, in the south was given the name of the Arrowhead Trail (U S 91). Since then it has been one of the heaviest traveled routes of the Nevada transcontinentals, serving traffic coming from Utah and its scenic national parks, before entering and crossing southern Nevada to continue towards its



Twenty Horsepower, 16-Wheel Drive, and Loaded for a New Mining Camp

Camels Came, But Didn't Stay Long

Pacific Coast terminus at Los Angeles, Calif.

Another route was later projected across the State from east to west. This, U S 6, or the Theodore Roosevelt highway, courses diagonally over the south-central portion of Nevada to enter California through Montgomery Pass, a low divide in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

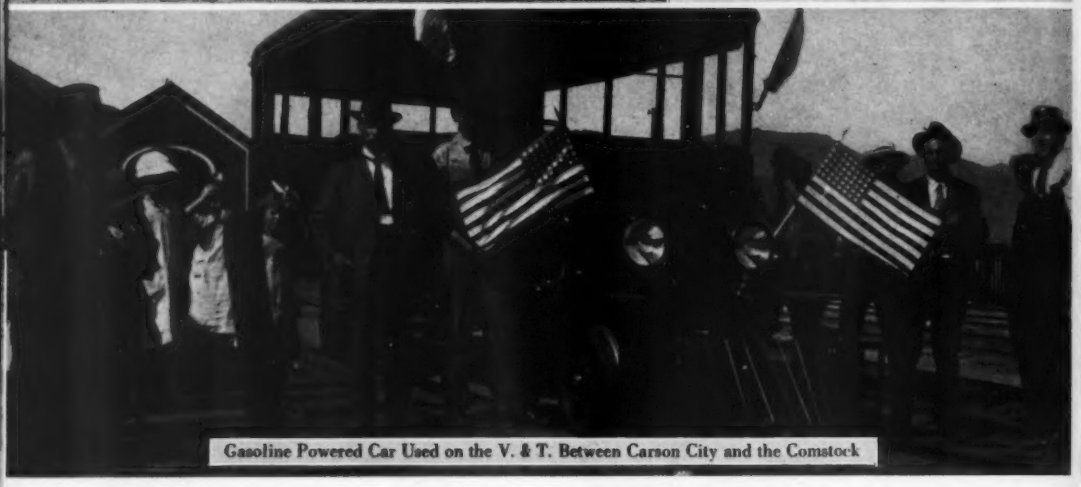
With these four hard-surfaced routes Nevada is well taken care of for its present east-west travel, and the change from ruts to high standard roads, with the help of the Federal Government, through its Federal aid highway project allocations, has been accomplished during the past twenty years.

During those two decades north and south travel increased and brought demands for improved service for traffic in those directions. First, efforts were applied to hard surfacing U S 395, which courses along a line roughly paralleling the east wall of the Sierra Nevada mountains. This route through Nevada is comparatively short, but it serves the most populous region of the State. Where it passes out of Nevada to traverse high California country in the south, it junctions with a connecting highway to form Nevada routes 3 and 5. Recently this southern portion was, with its northern connections in Churchill, Pershing, and Humboldt Counties, designated as U S 95, and more familiarly called the I. O. N.-Bonanza Highway.

In eastern Nevada, highway travel facilities were greatly improved with the building of a paved road from the Idaho border to the immense copper mining activities in the vicinity of Ely and to the Boulder Dam area. Known as the International Four States Highway it links Canada with Mexico.

In 1917, when the Nevada State Department of Highways was organized, there were no hard-surfaced roads within the State's boundaries. At the close of 1939 approximately 2,800 miles of high-class highways were completed, and this development was supplemented by a system of nearly 27,000 miles of secondary and unimproved roads.

Joy Riding in the Horse and Buggy Days



Gasoline Powered Car Used on the V. & T. Between Carson City and the Comstock

Together they comprise a network reaching to all sections of the State. This far-flung, but well conceived, system serves all the populated centers as well as the developed rural areas, and makes accessible innumerable scenic places in a State having 110,000 square miles of geographical area with a population slightly in excess of 100,000 and where traffic is increasing greatly each year.

Anticipating greatly increased volumes of traffic over all of its arterials in the future, and recognizing the strategic importance of good roads with a maximum of safety relating to national security and feasibility for transporting mobile military units, all Nevada highways are now being designed and constructed in conformity with the standards established by the Public Roads Administration. Nevada's highway system today compares favorably with the best in the Nation.

In the pioneer days men also dreamed of railroads that would cross the continent. These dreams haunted men until they became realities, and so the railroads came to contribute their share in the building up of the West.

Laying rails over endless miles of undeveloped country was a gigantic undertaking, but it was accomplished. In fact the job was one of the most spectacular and thrilling achievements in the Nation's history.

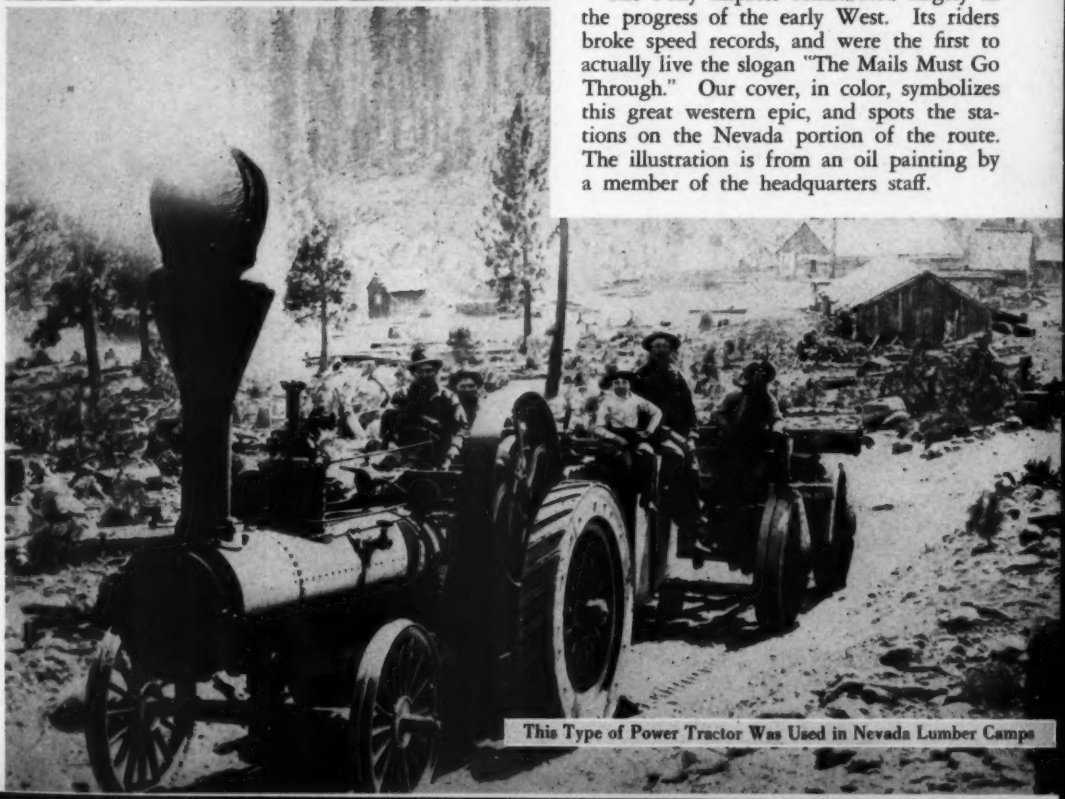
Under tremendous difficulties the Central Pacific (now known as the Southern Pacific) was pushed across mountains, down canyons, over valleys and deserts through a country where few men lived, where water was scarce, and all materials had to be hauled to the scene of construction from far distant points.

Steel rails over the Sierra Nevada mountains, with a summit of over 7,000 feet, crossed from the west into Nevada for the first time on December 13, 1867. The Central Pacific employed between 20,000 and 25,000 men and from 5,000 to 6,000 teams to do the job, and between 500 and 600 tons

When the Comstock Boomed, Double Headers Hauled Trainloads of Ore

THE COVER

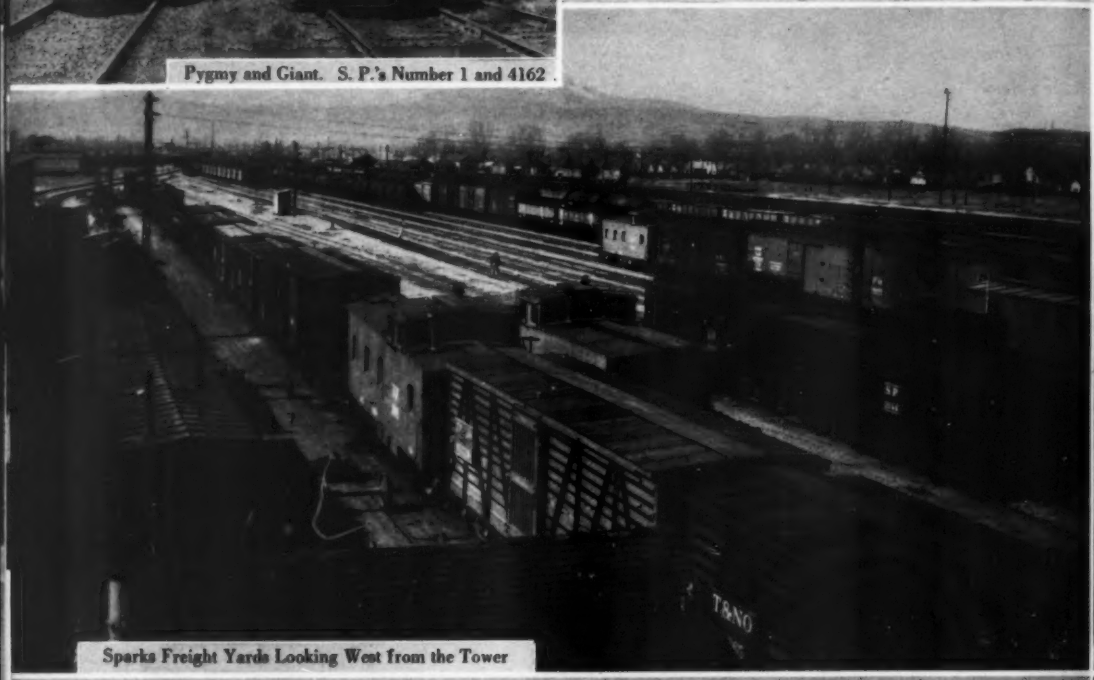
The Pony Express contributed largely in the progress of the early West. Its riders broke speed records, and were the first to actually live the slogan "The Mails Must Go Through." Our cover, in color, symbolizes this great western epic, and spots the stations on the Nevada portion of the route. The illustration is from an oil painting by a member of the headquarters staff.



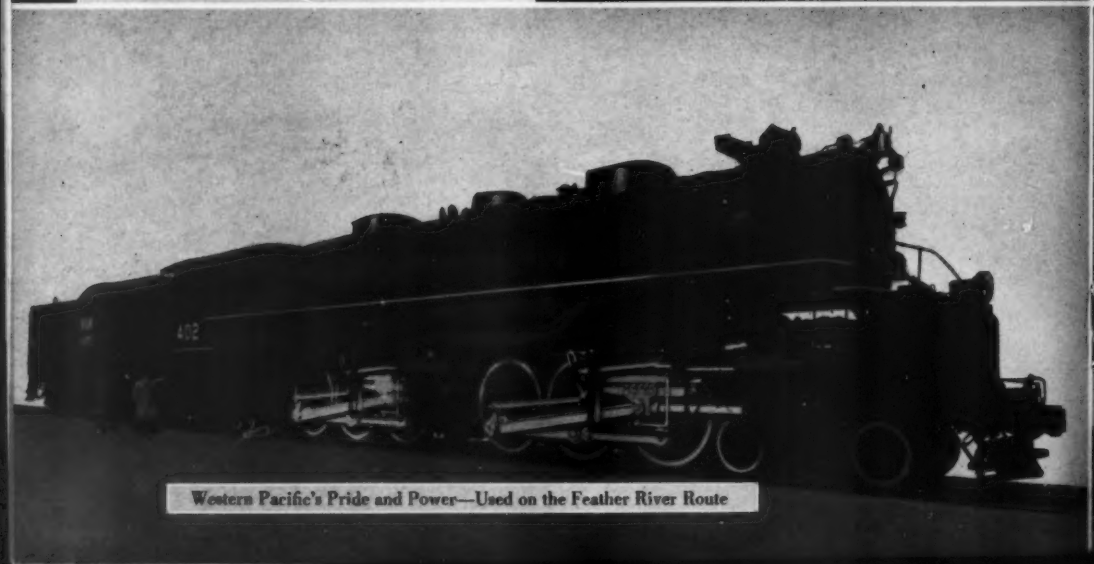
This Type of Power Tractor Was Used in Nevada Lumber Camps

Pygmy and Giant. S. P.'s Number 1 and 4162

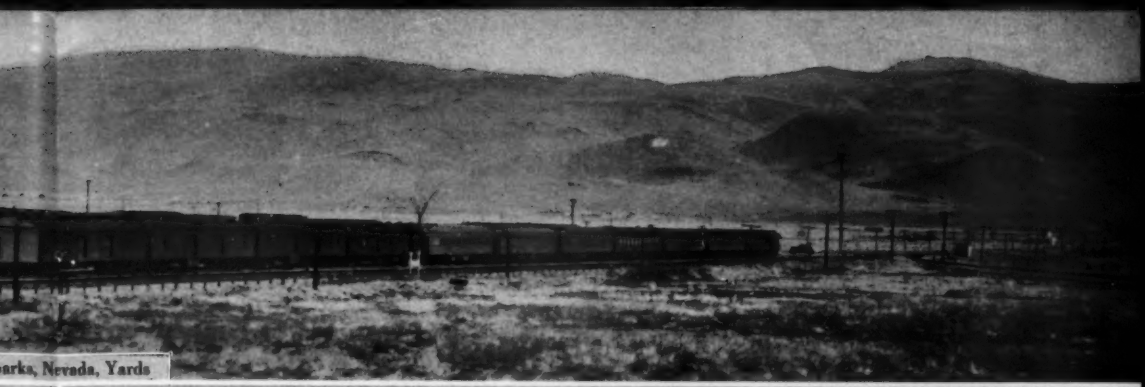
Number 21, a Modern Passenger Train, Approaching the Sparks, Nevada, Y



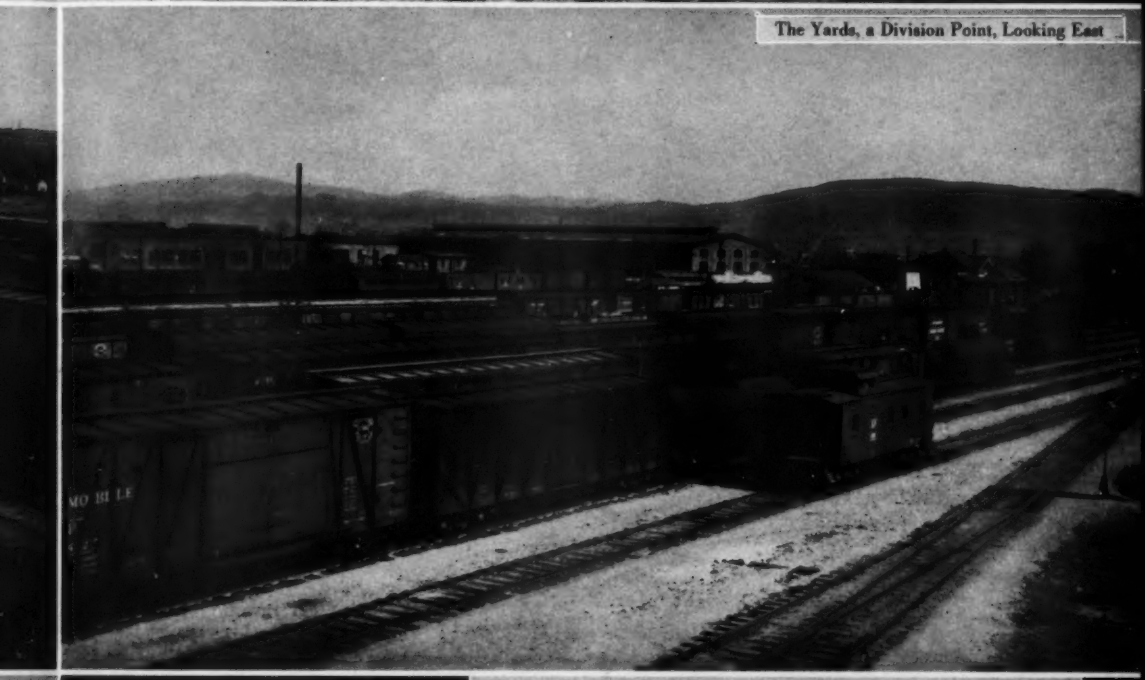
Sparks Freight Yards Looking West from the Tower



Western Pacific's Pride and Power—Used on the Feather River Route



arks, Nevada, Yards



The Yards, a Division Point, Looking East

The Last Word in Modern Railroading. Streamliner City of Los Angeles

The Western Pacific Railway, more popularly known as "The Feather River Route," was the second transcontinental line to serve Nevada. Above illustration shows a happy crowd celebrating the arrival of the first Western Pacific passenger train in Elko, Nevada, August 21, 1910.

The Central Pacific Reached Elko in 1868

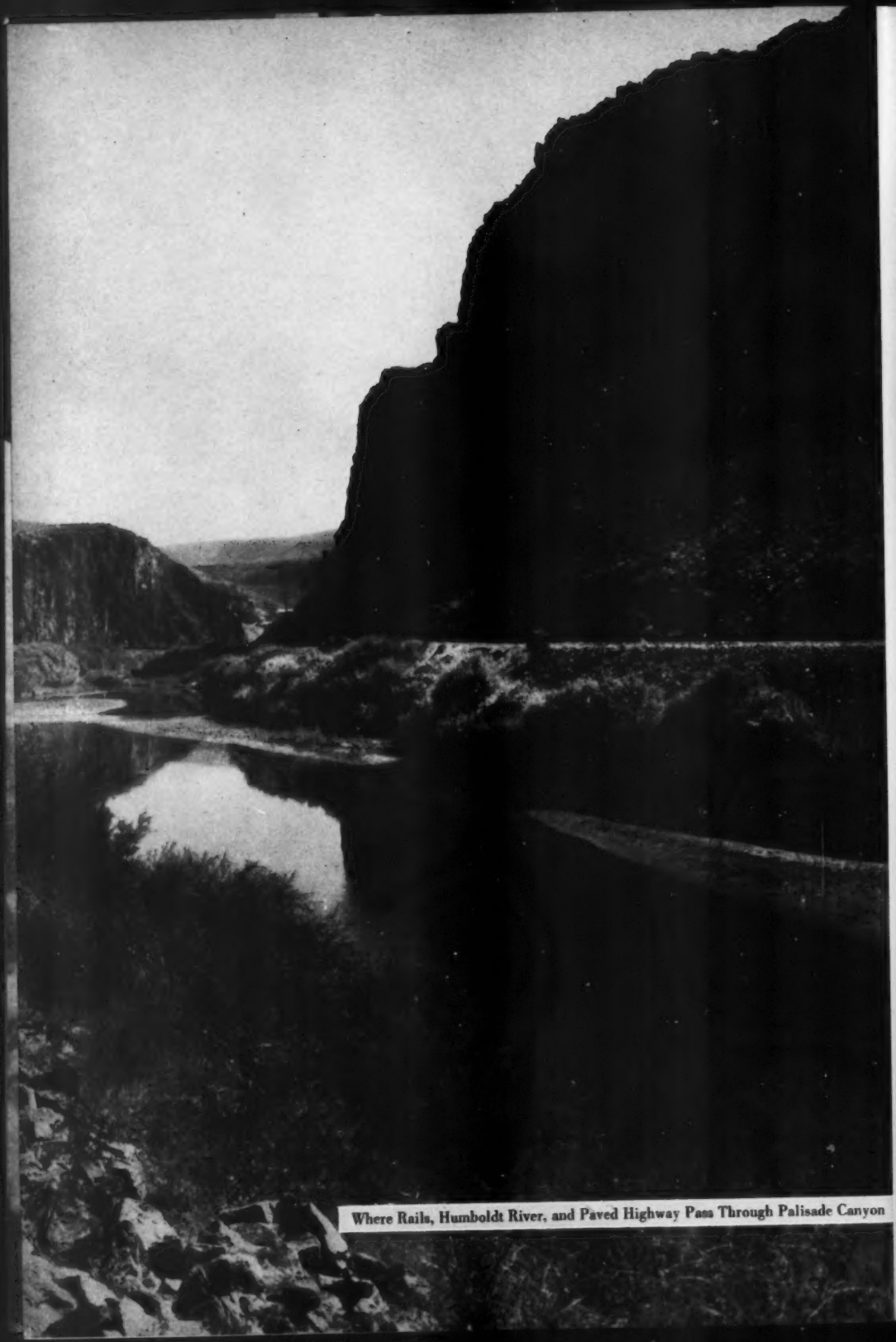
of materials were used daily during the construction period.

On June 19, 1868, the Central Pacific line reached Reno in its eastward progress. Reno was nothing more than a village at the time. Wadsworth, 35 miles farther east, born with the coming of the railroad, was reached on July 22 of that year. The country east of Wadsworth was a desert. It afforded little that could be used in the construction of a railroad. With the exception of a few cords of stunted pine and juniper trees all the fuel had to be hauled from the Sierra Nevada mountains. There was not a coal bed anywhere along the line of the road. There was not a tree on that desert section for a distance of 500 miles that would make a board. There was no water after leaving the Truckee and Humboldt Rivers. In the mountains east of Wadsworth small springs were developed. When water was obtained it was carefully conserved and piped over miles of desert to the lines of the railroad. Most of the water used on the Nevada construction work had to be hauled in water trains to the end of the track, and from there in tank wagons to the gangs working ahead.

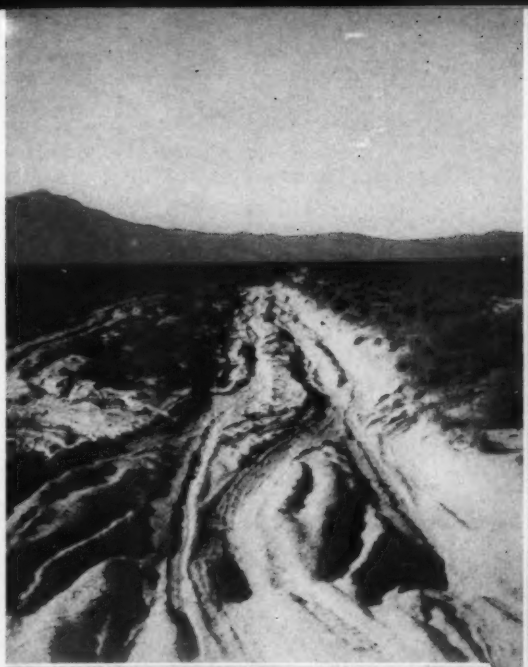
To expedite the construction work about 3,000 men were sent 300 miles in advance of the track to Palisade Canyon, in Elko County. There workmen were supplied by teams and wagons hauling materials over the desert. Another construction force carried the grading from Wadsworth east. Ties were hauled hundreds of miles to places where construction gangs were pushing the line eastward.

On March 5, 1869, the Central Pacific was operating trains to its rail end in Carlin, and from there the tracks were laid, with great speed, eastward. In spite of the difficulties of desert construction it was easy work compared with the obstacles encountered in the snow-covered mountains to the west. From Wadsworth, Nevada, to Ogden, Utah, the road was built between July 1868 and May 1869 with a force averaging 5,000 workmen. Between nine and ten months were required to build this 555 mile section.

When the rails of the Union Pacific, building westward from Omaha, and the Central Pacific building eastward from Sacramento, were joined at Promontory Point, Utah, the great task of constructing a transcontinental



Where Rails, Humboldt River, and Paved Highway Pass Through Palisade Canyon



1917—Before Highways Were Built, Roads Were Rough

1940—Smooth Riding Across the Desert Makes Travel a Pleasure

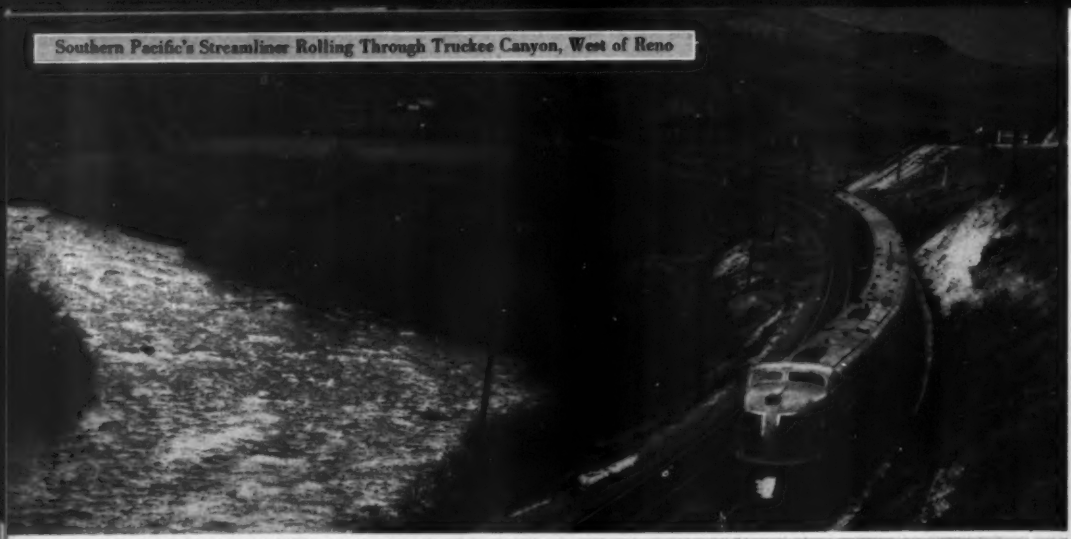
railroad had been completed. Shortly afterward the first train passed safely over the road and brought the eastern seaboard to the Pacific coast in less than a week of travel. That was remarkable speed in those days, and the construction job was a stupendous achievement.

When the Central Pacific built eastward through Nevada in 1868 they selected Wadsworth as the division point. It also became the base of supplies for construction gangs. With another change in 1904 the division point was moved 30 miles west to the town of Sparks. The plant at Sparks was built especially to better accommodate the east and west travel over the road. Division offices, round houses and shops, in which major repairs to rolling stock can be made, were built there and have remained to contribute their share to the prosperity of the State. Around this railroad activity has grown a city of about 5,000 people. The city has broad, paved streets, its workmen enjoy comfortable well-built homes, their children have fine schools, and the citizens worship in churches of various denominations and carry on their trade in modern business stores and establishments.

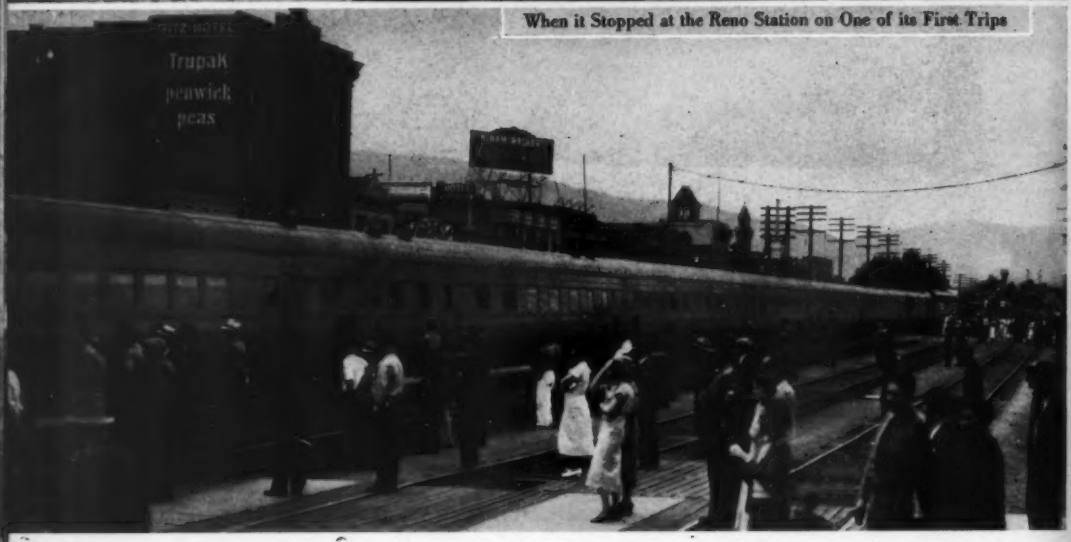
Especially designed locomotives have been developed by the Southern Pacific to haul long freight and passenger trains over the Sierra Nevada mountains, 30 miles to the west of Sparks, where tunnels and long snow sheds have been made necessary as a part of the right-of-way line. Engine and fuel units of this type measure 120 feet in length, and have the engineer's cab located at the extreme forward end instead of the rear of the engine unit as in nearly all other standard types of heavy locomotives. These Mallets are probably the strangest appearing but most powerful locomotive units in the entire West. Lessening discomfort from smoke and gases to engine crews while passing through the tunnels and snow sheds, which have an aggregate length of 37 miles, and to insure clear vision ahead, this type of oil burning locomotive has been found most effective.

Building of the Western Pacific Railroad, which was completed in the fall of 1909, gave the State of Nevada its second transcontinental rail line. This railroad was built largely by hand labor and teams. Formal opening of the road for passenger service took place on August 22, 1910. Important towns along the route are Gerlach, Winnemucca, Elko, and Wells. A short line connection serves Reno. In Nevada the Western Pacific makes connection with two other major railroads, the Nevada Northern at Shafter and the Union Pacific at Wells.

The Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, a unit of the Union Pacific System, comprises



Southern Pacific's Streamliner Rolling Through Truckee Canyon, West of Reno



When it Stopped at the Reno Station on One of its First Trips

the third transcontinental crossing the State. It serves the Grand Canyon of the Colorado on the north rim, the National Parks of Utah, and the Las Vegas and Boulder Dam areas in Nevada.

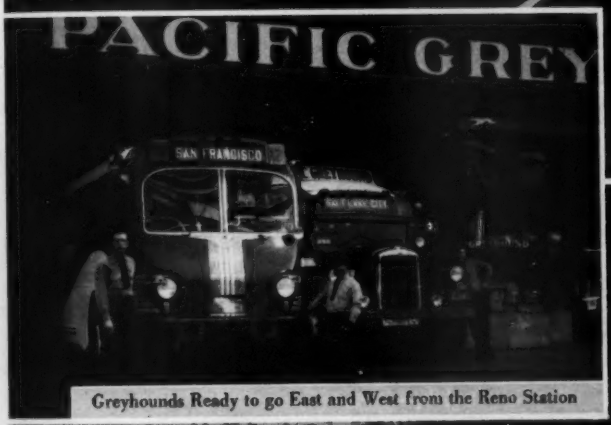
In 1921, through acquisition of additional capital stock of this road, the Union Pacific System assumed ownership of the line complete. Its streamliners are recognized as the last word in modern railroad rolling stock. The Union Pacific maintains a division point at Caliente, 120 miles northeast of Las Vegas.

Mining activities in the Comstock Lode district in western Nevada, where Virginia City was growing rapidly, brought about the construction of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad in 1867. The line operated between Carson City, the State capital, and Virginia City, the great mining camp. Prior to the building of this road, ore was hauled by team and wagon, and lumber from the Sierras was transported by "bull team" and cart. An attempt was even made to transplant camels from their native lands to Nevada as freight carriers in those days. These camels soon disappeared from the trails and rutted roads because they were found to be unfitted for the purpose in this western land.

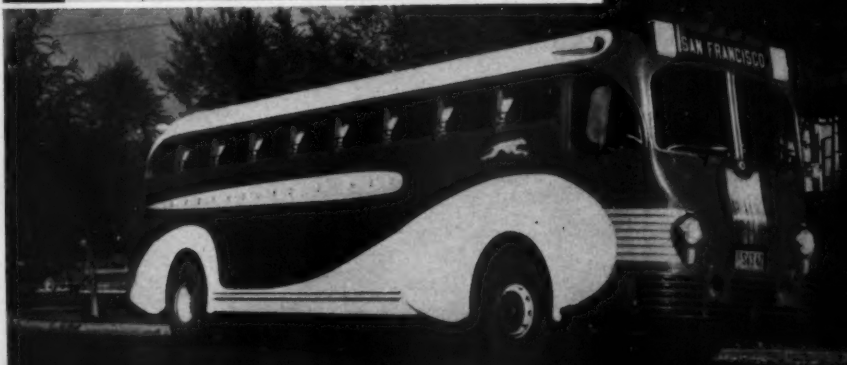
The V. & T. was extended northward to Reno in 1871, and made rail connections with the Central Pacific. In 1874 as many as 36 trains daily were needed to haul the freight and carry the passengers to and from the Comstock. Peak load capacity has been recorded as 45 trains daily.

In 1906 a standard gauge line was com-

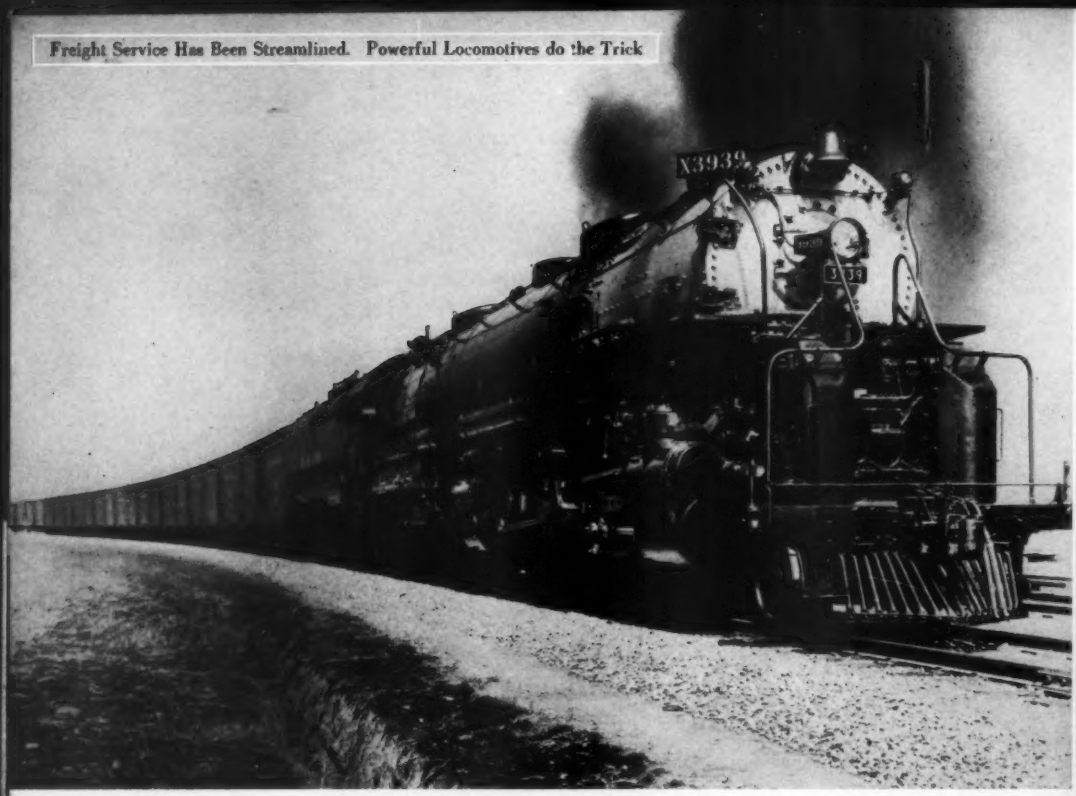
Highways Have Been Developed Too. Safety Stripe, Retaining Wall, and Smooth Surface



Greyhounds Ready to go East and West from the Reno Station



By Way of the Travel Bus



Freight Service Has Been Streamlined. Powerful Locomotives do the Trick

pleted which extended from Cobre, a small station on the Central Pacific in eastern Nevada, to Ely and McGill, in White Pine County. This Nevada Northern line serves one of the largest industrial enterprises in the State—the development of huge copper deposits in the vicinity of Ruth and Ely.

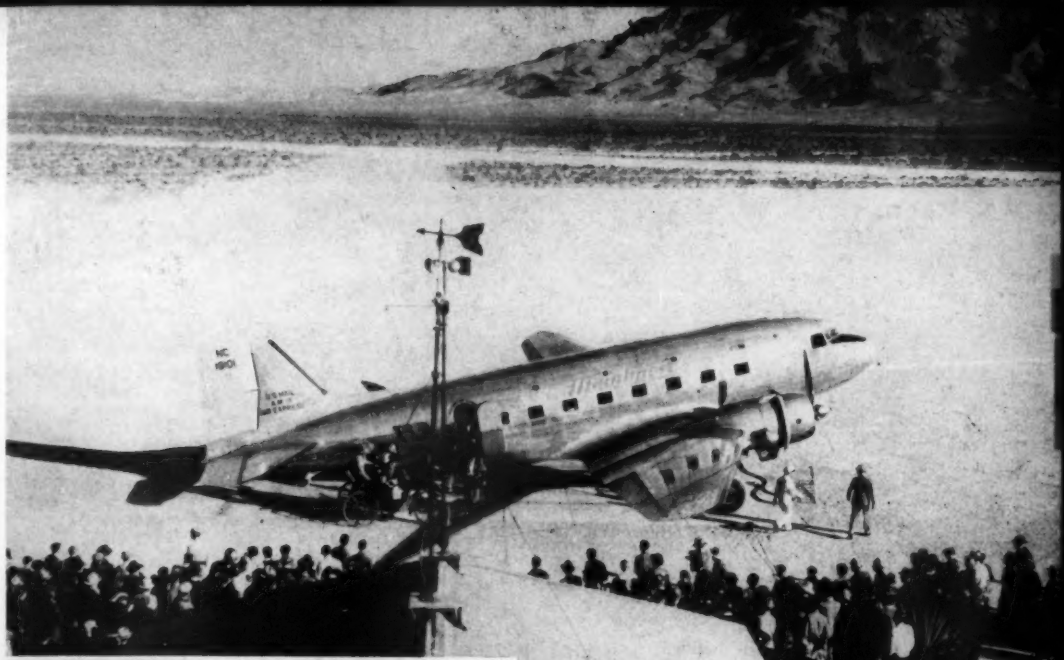
Several other regional lines were built in the course of the years which have served mining and agricultural industries. Some have weathered the storm of financial difficulties by adopting modern supplemental transport methods. Others have met a less desirable fate and have ceased operations.

Airplanes, the lusty infants of transportation, afford highly developed services, and extensive airports have been conditioned near the larger communities and designated as regular stops on the transcontinental air routes. Landing fields for planes are found in most all of the smaller towns, while emergency landing fields spotted along established routes make airplane travel less hazardous in this mountain country, and are important aids to ship pilots. Air beacons flash intermittently from lofty peaks along the set courses, and these mountain-top stars guide pilots during night flying.

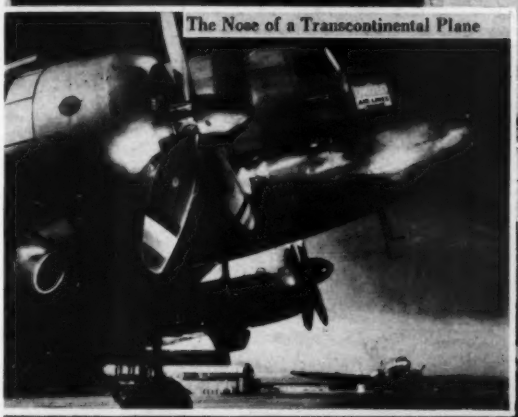
With the coming of the transcontinental railroads, the hard-surfaced highways, and later the airplanes, citizens of Nevada began to realize that there was much in the Great Basin country which is intensely fascinating and that many opportunities exist.

When modern transportation lanes spread over this broad area they did not alter or magically transform the topographical features of the State. These remain just about as they were in the pioneer days. Modern transportation means did disclose many hidden secrets. Good highways made them safer to reach, and through this convenience opportunities for industrial development became apparent.

Innumerable places of natural scenic grandeur in its ranges possess an enchantment appealing to those who come to visit the wide open spaces by rail, by plane, or over the highways. Nevada's gorgeous sunsets, its colorful hills, and its broad stretches of space are deeply impressive, while its healthful and invigorating climate and its historical associations amaze travelers who visit the State for the first time. They learn to their great surprise, that Nevada has been made safe and delightful because of safe highways and the congenial reception of its people.



The Fastest and Most Modern Type of Transportation.
So Different from the Covered Wagon



The Nose of a Transcontinental Plane

Crowds Came to the Air Show at Las Vegas Field

PONY EXPRESS
80th ANNIVERSARY

AN EPIC IN THE TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM OF THE WEST